

**DRAFT**



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017 IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AT 6.00PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: P Barton (Chairman), P Smith (Town Mayor), R Claydon (Deputy Town Mayor) T Luker, N Pinnegar, L Farmer.

Co-opted members: A Burns, C Mitchell.

**IN ATTENDANCE** Mrs D Hyam.

**145. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** I Jones.

**146. DECLARATION OF INTEREST.** None expressed by members.

**147. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016.** Proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr P Smith that the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

**148. RESULTS OF ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS.** Allotment inspections had taken place at the end of June and the Council had received a complaint regarding the condition of allotments at Knapp Road in the area of 19-23. The following results were read out.

**Results Following 14 Day Notice**

Site	Plot	Response	Action
Knapp Rd	13A	No response	Inspect-follow up letter to quit 25/7/17
Knapp Rd	19B	Continuing lapse due to illness	Monitor progress Much improved
Knapp Rd	21B	No response	Inspect-Follow up letter to quit 25/7/17
Knapp Rd	22A	Given up	
Knapp Rd	22B	Continuing making improvements	Monitor progress
Knapp Rd	32	Bereavement in family will improve over coming weeks	Monitor progress
New Rd	7B	Continuing lapse due to illness	Monitor progress
New Rd	12	Reducing to half	
New Rd	22A	No response	Inspect-follow up letter to quit 25/7/17
New Rd	24	Continuing lapse due to illness	Monitor progress
New Rd	26	Report from site representative improvements are being made	Monitor progress
New Road	27A	Little progress new tenant	Letter of concern sent 25/7/17

New Road	27B	Little progress new tenant	Letter of concern sent 25/7/17
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Mrs Hyam reported that as a result of the letters sent out to quit and present vacant plots there would be the equivalent of 3 full plots available at Knapp Road and 3 full plots available at New Road and there are no names on the waiting list. The condition of the allotments are poor and will need strimming and then covering with weed proof membrane. It was noted that this may encourage new tenants as trying to cultivate an overgrown plot is very daunting and does put off a lot of prospective tenants.

Cllr L Farmer entered the meeting.

Concern was raised regarding the cost to the Town Council for strimming and covering plots that tenants have not cultivated. A new clause could be added to the Allotments Agreement indicating that any new tenant is to pay a deposit. This is to cover strimming if it is left in an overgrown state when vacated. The deposit would be returned if it is left in an acceptable condition. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr T Luker and all agreed to refer this to Town Council .

**149. WATER SUPPLY AT NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS.** The poor water supply issue was being investigated by Severn Trent and the Council is waiting for a quote to repair or improve the water supply. At present there are three options to solve the problem as follows;

1. Hire our own digger with driver and try to locate a crushed pipe in the 100 yards or so length of this pipe which is about a meter underground. A significant amount of this would be inaccessible and very disruptive. If any pipe damage was found we would still be faced with repair to the metal pipe which is very small in diameter.
2. Do nothing and place water troughs at lots of points around the site stating that tenants must live with low pressure. The site is already very sloping and difficult to navigate and this would compound problems with the site's usability and desirability.
3. Install a new metre connection with Severn Trent. This would be a slightly larger pipe with access point near our entrance. Severn Trent have sent us forms to complete to request a quote but they charge £138 to prepare the quote as it includes a site specific investigation which may involve traffic regulation, assessing other services and utilities nearby, etc. The Town Council would need to authorize a spend for this sum to obtain a quote in order that the Council is informed of its options. Installing a new Severn Trent tap is likely to be expensive involving a few thousand pounds, however once done, there would be a larger pipe, a nearer access point and fewer problems in the future from other parties damaging the main allotment pipe.

It was suggested that the holding tank system discussed at a previous meeting be considered as a more cost effective solution which would have the benefit of meeting new water regulations. Some concern was raised with this system not being able to keep up with demand especially during dry periods. It was decided that Cllr P Smith would work out mathematically if this would be a viable option. Mrs Hyam to supply meter reading figures.

**150. NOTICEBOARD NEW ROAD.** The Chairman thanked A Burns for offering to put up the new noticeboard and confirmed that the Council would like it to be erected to the right hand side of the main gate as you enter the site. Cllr R Claydon offered to help A Burns with this project.

**151. NEW ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PATH AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE.** Discussions had taken place at a recent site meeting to improve the sloped path to the main gate. It was suggested a series of steps could be installed with a handrail. However, following a survey carried out by Cllr P Smith, this was going to be very expensive in the region of 10 to 20 thousand pounds and the steps would need to be quite high due to the gradient. A local contractor suggested that the path could be altered to a curve with a hand rail and shallow steps. This would allow tenants to access the site easily with wheel barrows. The contractor has been asked to produce a sketch and a quote for this alteration so it can be considered by the Council.

**152. STRIMMING OF PLOT 42 NEW ROAD.** The Caretaker has started to strim plot 42 and the bank at New Road so the bank can be inspected following complaints from the residents at the housing development at the Chipping Surgery. Once the strimming has been completed it is hoped that the plot will be covered with a weed proof membrane. It was noted that one tenant living in the new development was accessing the site over the fence and had cut steps into the bank. Mrs Hyam will be sending a letter as this was not agreed and is unacceptable.

**153. SUGGESTIONS FOR PROPOSAL TO ALLOW DEDICATED CHILDREN'S PLOTS.** The Chairman proposed that the Committee consider allowing a plot to be dedicated for children. This would enable children to get involved in gardening and enjoy seeing how things grow, understand where food comes from and encourage healthy eating. The plots would need to be small an eighth of a full plot and the ground cleared ready. The parents of a child or children would need to register as the tenant, sign an agreement and be there at all times to supervise. This is already allowed in the present Allotment Agreement but it was felt that a clause referring to children's plots should be added. The cost of a children's plot would be an eighth of the full plot fee. Investigations will continue into procedure and implementation of such a scheme. All were in agreement.

**154. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM KNAPP ROAD REPRESENTATIVE.** C Mitchell had nothing to report. The Chairman asked if the Knapp Road Association were active. It was noted that numbers have dwindled over the past 12 months. C Mitchell to make enquires and suggest a meeting with the Town Council to discuss future plans.

**155. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM NEW ROAD REPRESENTATIVE.** A Burns had nothing to report.

**156. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** Water supply New Road up-date, Progress on plots for Children, Path at main entrance New Road.

**157. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING.** Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre

**158.** This completed the business of the Allotments Committee

Signed.....Chair of the Allotments Committee

Date.....